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Dean Logan's Blog

Moot Court Kudos

Posted by David Logan on 12/16/2010 at 12:00 AM

A key indicator of a law school's ability to produce excellent boots-on-the-ground lawyers is its student performances in moot court competitions – intramural, regional and beyond.

So it's my happy privilege to report some stellar performances in that area. On November 21, a team of three RWU Law students – 3Ls **Amy Broderick, Robert Cavanaugh, and John Meara** – advanced to the finals of the Northeast Regional Tournament of the National Moot Court Competition, the largest forensic event in the country. The RWU Law team beat Vermont and Syracuse to advance to the semi-finals, where they pulled out a win against Boston College. The final round went to Boston University by the narrowest of margins, and both teams advanced to the national stage in New York City next month. John Meara walked off with the honors as Best Oralist at the competition.

And there's more: On November 14, another team of RWU Law students – 3Ls **Roslyne Atilus, Emma Haritos, Kurt Rocha** and 2L **Steve Nelson** – advanced to the finals of the Northeast Regional Tournament of the ABA's Section of Labor and Employment Law's Seventh Annual Law Student Trial Advocacy Competition in Boston. More than 100 schools compete in this competition each year, making it the second largest trial advocacy competition in the nation. They beat a strong team from Suffolk in the semi-finals before losing a close round to George Washington.

At the same competition, a second Roger Williams team – 3Ls **Scott Clark, Shannon O'Neil, Erica Pilicy, and Andrea Shapiro** – advanced to the semi-finals before being defeated. That made RWU Law the only school in the competition to have two teams advance beyond the preliminary rounds. Our students demonstrated exemplary advocacy skills that earned high praise from the sitting federal judges.

Closer to home, I'd like to congratulate **Kevin Olasanoye** for winning this year's **Esther Clark Competition**. Kevin and **Celine Gaston** did an excellent job arguing before the **Rhode Island Supreme Court**, who graciously preside over the finals each year. The Justices were impressed by our students' ability to address a complex legal issue, and told the audience that Kevin and Celine were some of the best competitors they have heard here at Roger Williams! I'd also like to thank the student body for coming out and supporting this great annual event.

Named for a late, much-loved RWU Law professor Esther Clark, the **Clark Competition** – our flagship intramural forensic competition – was endowed by Esther's husband **John Clark**. Each year, Mr. Clark provides a scholarship to the best oralist (this year, **Kevin Olasanoye**) and the best brief writer (**Ezra Willey**). Soon after this year's competition ended, I was saddened to learn John had passed away after a short illness. He was a great friend of Roger Williams Law and he will be missed.

Kudos to all of our talented advocates-in-training – and, of course, to the first-rate coaches who prepared them for the job, led by **Jon Shelburne**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law and our Director of Competitions. Many thanks are also due **Heather Bernier**, for her invaluable assistance in organizing this competition, and to all of the faculty members who served as judges.



John and Amy before the Championship Round



On to the National Championships!
(L-R) Robert Cavanaugh, Amy Broderick, John Mera,
Coach Jon Shelburne



Clark Champion **Kevin Olanoye** congratulated by
Hon. Paul Suttell, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Court



Celine Gaston handles a question from a "hot bench"



The Rhode Island Supreme Court and the Moot Court Board

Front row: (L-R) Associate Justice James Robinson, Chief Justice Paul Suttell, Associate Justice Francis Flaherty, and Associate Justice Gilbert Indeglia.

Second Row (L-R) Kathryn Blythe, Ezra Willey, Celine Gaston, Kevin Olasanoye, Jonathan Cook, John Meara

Third Row: (L-R) Rebecca Carey, Amy Broderick, Andre Digou, Jay Werther,
Kristin Fitzharris, Dylan Murphy, Robert Cavanagh, Justin Pruett